MUTT AND JEFF MAKE $5 A MINUTE

Takes Fisher Two Hours a Day to Draw Pictures Bringing $150,000 a Year

(From the American Magazine)

"Bud Fisher, creator of "Mutt and Jeff" is the highest paid cartoonist on earth. He gets $150,000 a year for making the American people chuckle—which is twice what the president gets for shaping their national destiny. Furthermore, Fisher is troubled neither by international complications nor by office seekers. His office is in his hat.

For drawing six comic strips a week for 48 weeks a year this genial humorist receives $78,000. The rest of his income is made up from vaudeville engagements, which bring him a thousand dollars a week; the proceeds from five "Mutt and Jeff" shows and animated cartoons; the sale of an annual "Mutt and Jeff" book, post cards, plaster figures, buttons and other novelties.

Two Hours' Work a Day

On the average it takes Fisher two hours to draw his daily comic strip, for which he is paid at the rate of $270 an hour, or nearly five dollars a minute.

Fisher is the Midas of mirth. His marked success has done more than any other influence to lift the level of the American cartoonist's salary. These accomplishments, startling in themselves become almost bewildering when you consider that he is only 31 years old and never took a drawing lesson in his life.

"Bud" was born in San Francisco in 1885. Later his parents, who are now sharing their son's prosperity, removed to Portland, Ore., to Milwaukee and then to Chicago. As soon as the boy was big enough to hold a pencil he began expressing his infant soul in scrawls. His father's linen collars, off or on, were his favorite drawing boards, which perhaps accounted for the paternal reluctance to encourage his artistic ambitions.

"Bud", whose real name, by the way is Harry Conway Fisher, went to the Hyde Park high school in Chicago where he ran on a champion relay team with Walter Eckersall, the famous football quarterback. It was at Hyde Park that he was given the sobriquet which has stuck to him ever since. At the end of a brief collegiate course at the University of Chicago, he drifted out to the Pacific Coast. There he earned his first money with his pencil by drawing cartoons for San Francisco tradesmen at 50 cents each. Under these pictures would appear snappy trade captions, designed to attract prospective customers.

Tried to Get Steady Job

But "Bud" was not satisfied long with such tame work. He tried for a job on the San Francisco Examiner, and was turned down. He smiled over this experience long afterward when the owner of the Examiner was commandeering the most expensive legal talent in an effort to hold the cartoonist's services for his New York newspaper.

After being turned down by the Examiner, Fisher went over to the Chronicle office, where he made so strong a bid for recognition that they apologized for offering him only $15 a week.

"I thought at that time that $10 a week would make me independently wealthy," he said afterward, "but of course I never let on."

He stayed with the Chronicle from 1905 until near the end of 1907. The city was so mussed up by the big fire that he found himself without a job. So he went to Los Angeles. There he ran into a man named Steele, who was getting out an emergency Sunday section for the wrecked Chronicle, on the presses of the Los Angeles Times. Steele could not get any good artists to work for him, because all the local men were employed by the Los Angeles Examiner and could not accept retainers from another paper. He offered Fisher $15 a page.

Turned Business Man

"I took him up," says "Bud," "and then I got a lot of the 'Examiner' artists—who could work for me—to make me these pages at seven dollars and a half apiece. I cleared the other seven-fifty. At that rate I didn't really care how long the fire lasted."

Fisher went back to San Francisco with $1600 in his pocket and a lot of newly acquired independence. He was ready to hold out for $25 a week, "big money" he called it, but finally compromised at $22.50.

On Nov. 15, 1907, there appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle a cartoon comic strip portraying race track adventures of one "A. Mutt." Thus was born a million dollar idea. Fisher had been going to the races regularly and had spent interested hours in watching men tear around to lay down bets. Racing was at its heyday in San Francisco just then, and Fisher figured that if he could pick out a composite type of man and run his racing experiences in a daily comic strip he would make a hit. He did.

The idea caught on like wildfire, and on Dec. 10 of the same year the Examiner people made a mighty attractive offer to the kid whom they had turned away in 1905. Fisher accepted the offer.

Work Calls Him East

Soon after he entered upon his new job, "A. Mutt" was joined by little "Jeff," who was destined to be his companion through countless comic adventures. "I always liked Mutt better, for he was my first friend," said Fisher, when asked which of his two characters he preferred, "but as some of my readers have a weakness for little Jeff, I let him get the better of it sometimes."

"Mutt and Jeff" soon began to make a reputation which spread far beyond state bounds and into the East.

Fisher came to New York in May, 1909, and made just as big a hit in the East as he had in the West.

Fisher is just short of medium height of good physique, and intensely fond of recreation. He goes in for automobiling, horseback riding and hunting. Each spring he travels South to the plantation of George Stallings manager of the Boston (National League) baseball team, and puts in two or three weeks hunting with Stallings, Ty Cobb and other baseball celebrities.

Although Fisher averages only two hours a day in actual work, he is always on the lookout for comic ideas. Sometimes he will pick one up from a chance remark, from an incident on the street or from the jokes of his friends.

I remember going one night to Fisher's home after we had attended a boxing match at Madison Square Garden, New York City. At I was getting in bed, he said, "I have a couple of ideas which I think I'll mull over a bit before turning in." I dropped off to sleep at once. When I woke up at 8 o'clock in the morning Bud had just finished two rattling good cartoons on which he had been working the whole night.

Fisher's work is now running in more than 100 newspapers in the United States, Canada, England, Cuba, South America and Mexico. His readers number millions. So will his bank roll in a few years if he keeps up his present clip. For he is a good business man as well as an artist.

"What is your ambition?" I asked him once.

"To make "Mutt and Jeff" a million-dollar idea," he replied.

And he is doing it.

JOHN N. WHEELER.

WILL GO TO COLLEGE

—Photo by Williams

MYRON NEAL

"Good Morning, have you seen this Courier carrier?"

He is Myron Neal, 15 years og age, and he carries the Courier on route No. 26, bounded by Chandler, Adams and Sunset avenues, Second and Fourth streets.

Myron, who is 15 years old is in the 10-B grade at high school and is taking a course in manual training and mechanical drawing.

He is a member of the Trinity M. E. church and also belongs to the Y. M. C. A.

He is the son of Ira J. Neal of 123 Washington avenue and his ambition is to be able to follow up his high school course with a college education.

England, Germany and France Agree

on one thing, if on no other. They all prohibit the sale of alum baking powders.

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CITY PENSION FOR WIDOWS WITH CHILDREN

New York Aldermen Vote $300,000 for That Purpose

NEW YORK, Apr. 18.—A municipal movement to provide pensions for widowed mothers with children was begun today with the adopting by the board of aldermen of a resolution under which would be appropriated $300,000, to be placed at the disposal of the child welfare board. If the resolution is acted on favorably next week by the board of estimate, the proposed allowance will be granted.

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